

February 8, 2013

To whom it may concern:

I regret that I cannot attend this event in person. We had prior commitments that could not be changed. I do appreciate the effort each of you has made to attend and I pray that your efforts to bring important change to our judicial system will be successful. I want to briefly share with you my story of how my views changed and why

Until about 3 years ago I supported the death penalty, then someone challenged me to support my view from scripture and after prayerfully reading applicable scriptures I found my pro death penalty arguments weak and could not support it from scripture without isolating certain verses from their context or from the rest of scripture. Out of the time of soul searching my views changed and I would love to see the death penalty abolished for the following reasons:

1. From limited research on my part, I do not believe the death penalty saves the taxpayer money. It appears to me that it costs more than life without parole
2. The death penalty has not proven to be a deterrent to crime.
3. People are not perfect and can make mistakes meaning even an innocent person could be declared guilty and wrongly put to death. According to Deuteronomy 19, if a witness would prove to be a liar, it should be done to them what was intended for the accused. That would make for some interesting scenarios in court!
4. Scripturally I cannot support the death penalty. If we were to use scripture for instance out of Exodus 21 and Leviticus 24 to support the death penalty, it would seem that we should have to apply all of the other examples from these chapters as well. I have yet to meet someone who supports the death penalty but is willing to apply the rest of those verses equally. The selective use of scripture is wrong. In the New Testament in Matthew 5 Jesus specifically lets us know that we are now held to a higher law. If we apply the teachings of Jesus, we acknowledge that sin must have consequences but the purpose of the consequences is to correct and restore, not kill. Jesus teaches us to be redemptive, to forgive, and restore. I have obviously only touched briefly on what scripture teaches.

In conclusion, I noticed a brief news article in Time Magazine this week, the April 9th issue. It states that according to Amnesty International only 20 nations carried out the death penalty in 2011. The top executioners (not including China and Iran) were Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and the US! I am not sure we should be proud of being on that list or being linked in that way with these countries!

Blessings,

*Alan Warneke*

Alan Warneke,  
Network Pastor/Superintendent